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"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

or

War is Wrong

By E. E. WALL
Ventura, Cal.

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ST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL
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FOREWORD

This booklet is the extension of the notes of a sermon preached when the "World War" was at its height, August 11th, 1918.

The purpose of this publication is to refute the German heresy of the loss of individuality and personal responsibility, to God and man, in the military mass; to refute the Mohammedan heresy of salvation by the sword; to prove there is no conflict but harmony between the Old and New Testaments respecting the binding commandment: "Thou shalt not kill"; and to furnish a soul satisfying reason, to the Christian, for participation in the "World War."

To Rev. J. R. Sawyer, my pastor when I responded to God's call to preach the Gospel.

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"Thou Shalt Not Kill" or War is Wrong

"Thou Shalt Not Kill." (Exodus 20:13).

On this morning, this holy Sabbath day, that part of time upon which God has fixed His claim and set His seal, we have met to worship God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

In preaching upon this text, at this time and under existing conditions, I am not unmindful of the delicacy and difficulty of my undertaking. Yet the words of St. Paul are both a command and comfort to me: " . . . praying that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." My Friends: I need your prayers that the Holy Spirit may be my guide into the truth, and that our "faith stand not in the wisdom of man but in the power of God."

I have in my heart a message, wrought out in prayer, and meditation upon the word of God, prayer and meditation extending through the months of this war, a message born of the very travail of my soul. This experience has deepened my sympathy for President Wilson, a great and good man as I believe him to be. His relation-

ships and thereby his responsibilities are multiplied and extended far beyond my own and he must therefore have suffered more as he entered this Gethsemane seeking to know the truth that can make men free and to lead them into the light of the day-dawn of liberty, justice and fraternity. The whole world called to him, as a Moses, and from out the night of Prussian diabolism, that call became a wailing plea for him to strengthen with our virile nation Christian civilization's enfeebled hands and to save a cause hourly growing more hopeless. No less did future generations call for him, by reason of his individuality, nationality and position, to declare and define the doctrine of intentional democracy. But he must needs have heard another voice, that on Sinai and no less on Calvary, thundering in the ears and consciences of men: "Thou Shalt Not Kill." He heard, too, the speech, and song, and laughter of his peaceful people. Out of range of the deadly engines of death our people on the Rockies' heights did not see the war cloud, with baleful blight, shadowing France and Belgium. In our quiet valleys and upon the templed hills of the North and East, and along the sun-kissed slopes of the southland we were not deeply disturbed by the detonating thunders of the cataclysmic carnage shaking half this world and churning the sea in its fury. President Wilson, through the vision of his vantage, understood that if Europe were to be saved from murder and suicide the

task was ours, and the duty was his to inform us, and lead the way, yet he waited and watched and prayed, hence his "watchful-waiting," because he saw the scourge, the thorns, the cross, the tomb ahead for the people he loves and serves so well, —for the purchased possession of our peace, from the Prussian Empire, must needs be bought with the mintage of human blood.

I have read the gospel story over and over and thought God's revealed record through and through. I looked upon the successive stages of humanity's tragic effort to find its true bearings in earth and heaven, through time and eternity. In the dawning light of Revelation's day I could read the flaming words, written upon the clouds of smoke about Sinai: "Thou Shalt Not Kill," yet I heard the dying groans of the prophets of Baal as men of faith in God put them to the sword. I followed Joshua, as he crossed the Jordan, and crossing build Jehovah's altar there, and from that altar go with fire and sword to destroy the inhabitants and substance of Caanan, and take the land. The power of the arm of God in battle I witnessed, in Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, David and a valiant host too numerous to name. His angels likewise brought death to the innocents of the homes and herds of Egypt, and invaded, with destroying hand, the camp of Sennacherib encompassing the praying people of God within Jerusalem's walls. I found the sacred record red with human blood, yet I see that it is

not God but man who thus mars the beauty of the page of Holy Writ. The sins of man stain the faithful record with fratricidal blood.

Turning to the new Testament, praying as I read, in my perplexity pondering its deep truths, but with God's promises like sunbeams in my mind: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find," "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled," "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him," " . . . the Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth." I knew these other words were also true for Jesus Christ, my Saviour, the Son of God, is their author: "Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time, thou shalt not kill . . . but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:3-5). "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence."

(Jno. 19:36). Here not only killing but its underlying motive—hate—is forbidden. I knew that between truth and truth there could be no contradiction. I believed with my life as the stake, that the Holy Bible, as my church accepts it, is the revealed truth of God and therefore these apparent contradictions between the Scriptures, Old and New, if correctly understood and interpreted would be found harmonious. To make my confusion more confounding the nations representing the highest exponents of Christian civilization, in the name of "The Prince of Peace" who came to bring "peace on earth" and "good will among men," with sword and bullet, bayonet and butt, with deadly darts from the sky, with juggernaut like tanks, and with destructive dreadnaughts of the deep were killing, killing, killing, millions of men and causing women and children to suffer and mourn.

From my study and this pulpit I have gone among men to search and find out the truth concerning this matter, from their conversations, sermons and speeches. In the same quest I have turned to the columns of the secular and religious press, and have failed to find from these sources a soul satisfying explanation of this mystery, an explanation reconciling this apparent conflict between the Old and New Testaments and consistent with the participation of my country, as one of the allies, in the world war. From personal association, press, pulpit and rostrum, with few

exceptions, came to me, conversations, articles, sermons and speeches the predominant note of which was hate and kill. This I knew did violence to our text, to the "Golden Rule," and to that part of the "Sermon on the Mount" which I have quoted. I knew likewise that my country could not find its justification for such action upon the ground of expediency or apparent human necessity arising from any combination of human and earthly circumstances, for the commandment: "Thou Shalt Not Kill," is an eternal truth and nothing inconsistent with it could ever justify disobedience to it. Truth is to be sought and known and not avoided, denied, or ignored. Such knowledge, sought and found, is light, where such ignorance is darkness. Spiritual things "are spiritually discerned." "Out of the heart the mouth speaketh." Therefore out of the heart heated over the fires of hate no such refined knowledge can proceed, and he who preaches a "gospel of hate" is not a safe spiritual guide.

I am not unmindful of the fact that to the person who has not been quickened by the Spirit of God into the new life in Christ, revenge for wrongs done by the enemy may be sufficient ground to kill the Kaiser and all his subjects, and hate aroused by the heinous deeds of the Hun may furnish him a justifying cause to participate in this carnival of human slaughter. Those who act upon impulse, apart from reason or conscience, see no need of asking WHY. But upon none of

these grounds can the Christian violate this God-given law of life, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," make null and void the "Golden Rule," set at naught the "Sermon on the Mount," and ignore the divine prerogative: "Vengeance is mine I will repay, saith the Lord."

Upon the statute books of our states we find the provision: That man in defense of his life against attack when he is where he has a legal right to be and engaged in what he has a legal right to do may repel force with force even to the extent of taking the life of his adversary. Seeking our country's justification, some have employed this legal doctrine of self defense, making Germany the criminal assailant and the Allies the defenders of their lives. This is sound legal doctrine and may be here correctly applied, but this is but a man-made law justifying the taking of human life and cannot serve our present purpose in reconciling war with this law of God set forth in this unequivocal and eternal commandment: "Thou Shalt Not Kill."

Others have cited the wars that Joshua and Gideon waged under Jehovah's direction. But the justification of my country's course in this war cannot lie in such precedent, for Joshua and Gideon acted under Jehovah's command. Universal sovereignty belongs to God. To give, to withhold, to take life, is His exclusive prerogative and man cannot with immunity usurp the prerogatives of God. Israel, then, acted through a

theocratic government in which God exercised supreme and immediate temporal sovereignty. That government served the divine purpose and there is none such on the earth to-day. God is still none the less supreme in His sovereignty but political groups exercise under Him, a delegated authority, by application of principles set forth in the fulfilled law and prophesies of God, in Jesus Christ our Saviour. There are no more prophets, as of old, for "there is no more open vision," only the written Word and the Holy Spirit to guide. God has given the law for time and eternity. It is for man, as God's Spirit enlightens him, to understand, interpret, and apply it in terms of life. In this he is not without prayer, the key to the exhaustless riches of God's grace and truth. No man-made law can rightfully or effectively contravene this organic law of the universe. Under this law all power in heaven and earth belongs to God, to execute His will and when this power is exercised apart from His authority the usurpation is sin, issuing often in painful temporal consequences, and if unforgiven, inevitably in ultimate eternal punishment.

I take the ground that every Christian must find, in this fulfilled law of God in Christ, the principles for his action under present conditions and in every relationship in life. Otherwise Christianity would be a failure, for Christianity is the whole life lived by faith in the Son of God.

I assert, as I have done in your hearing be-

fore, that every man must obey the law of his country, for to do otherwise is to disobey God. But I do not wish to convey the idea, in case the law itself be at fault, that servile silence is the righteous attitude, but I assert the contrary. The remedy, however, lies in correction and not in violation. I hold that all unwise legislation as well as all abuse and misuse of power, in a republic, such as the United States of America, permit of legal correction. This is one of the cardinal virtues and safeguards of a government of law, of, by, and for the people. Bloody revolution, or civil war, under such a form and system of government is not impossible but can never be justified. Violent opposition to such constituted authority is, theoretically at least, opposition to one's own will and welfare and therein an admission of unfitness for self government. By patient forbearance (which is often needful for discipline and for educational process prerequisite for self-governing capacity and the right use of the knowledge thus acquired under self control of this discipline), all vicious or unwise laws may be amended or repealed. Any one who attempts to distort the meaning of and misapply the law of the land to serve a present purpose, whatever the expediency, evinces a moral turpitude which degrades his intelligence and makes a confession of the weakness of the cause he espouses. Any like attempt through interpretative jugglery of the Scriptures, which is a higher law than of man's making, is

wicked, blasphemous, and ultimately destructive. Regardless of the issue, and though my life were in the balance, I would not intentionally or carelessly mis-state the meaning of this law of God, contained in the Holy Bible, because I both love and fear God and value the souls of men above all earthly considerations. I cannot subscribe to the sharp practice method to make the Scriptures fit the case in hand even though that case may be the present war, and those who have so transgressed and misguided others, I pray God "lay not this sin to their charge" beyond forgiveness, for they may have done it "ignorantly through unbelief." In a matter of such measureless magnitude and incalculable importance as the conditions and issues of this world war no man is justified in indulgence in dogmatic assertions grounded upon isolated and inapplicable Scripture quotations. For a cause to be right it must be supported by the whole Scripture. If the finite mind of man possessed sufficient perception and understanding, which it may under spiritual illumination, no just cause would lack consistent Scriptural support. There are many things stated in God's Word in which, thus far, there may have arisen no need for such apprehension and undertaking on our part, Scriptural enlightenment is never afforded for the satisfaction of speculative curiosity but to provide us light to "do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God."

The Light at Last.

Justification for participation in this world war requires Scriptural sanction and a sanction without Scriptural conflict. Those who neither desire nor demand it nevertheless need such justification. To the Christian or sinner who hungers and thirsts for this knowledge and assurance, so needful for civilian and soldier, who seeks it in God's Word, in prayer, the Holy Spirit will perform the divine function for and in such a one of supplying that gracious possession. Thus seeking and searching I have found peace of mind and rest for my soul in this vital matter. I have heard men in the pulpit and on the street extol this war as right without giving a real Scriptural reason, and glorifying it as the gateway to eternal life. Any heathen worshiper at Mahomet's shrine believes and can do as much. But mere assertions do not produce deepest conviction. In matters so vital to us, in two worlds, we wish to know the grounds, the reason, the authority. For my part I have never doubted either it was wrong for my country to join the Allies, or that in my Bible I could find a soul satisfying sanction not inconsistent with the commandment: "Thou Shalt Not Kill," paradoxical as the conviction and this conclusion may appear to many. In reading Paul's Epistle to the Romans the cloud of this mystery dissolved before the light of divine truth in which this inspired apostle wrote that letter to Christians among a

pagan people. The apparent conflict between the Old and New Testaments disappeared and I believe I see the bearing of the whole Word of God on this matter, the concord, harmony, and unity which ever prevail in all God's laws, and thoughts, and ways needful for man to know for a Christlike expression of his whole life.

CHAPTER II.

Sovereign Power.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill."

War that is inconsistent with this commandment is wrong. But this commandment and war seem mutually exclusive. Yet when we see in the governments of nations God's Sovereignty and in war His just judgment upon evil, which judgment like the commandment is divinely used for ultimate good, the inconsistency disappears.

I am glad that Saul of Tarsus was a lawyer and that God converted him into St. Paul, the divinely inspired apostle, to write these words: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God, therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise from

the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjugation not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause ye pay tribute (taxes) also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." (Rom. 13:1-7).

"All power in heaven and earth" belong to Jesus Christ, yet he was born when his mother was in Bethlehem to pay tax to Caesar. He also paid tribute into the treasury under a despicable despotism. Not once did he violate the law of the state, nor revile officers of state, nor advocate the destruction of the Roman autocracy.

All normal rational beings acknowledge the supreme and universal sovereignty of God and the wisdom and beneficence of His government. In so doing we accept the authority of "the higher powers" as the right use of authority delegated by Him to them. Herein we subscribe to the Scriptural claim that all civil government is ordained of God. The necessity arose from man's disobedience to God Himself and all earthly human government is primarily and ultimately for restraint of evil and promotion of good. In this

God registers His condemnation of evil and His approval of good and so does every good citizen.

In the Old Testament we have observed the record of God sending and leading His people, the Jews, in battle slaying thousands and tens of thousands but there the battle is always against evil. We witness the defeat of Israel's hosts but we find in those defeats God's disapproval of the evil and the encouragement of the good in His people, a people chosen for our ultimate earthly and heavenly good in Christ. God instituted these temporal rulerships and ordained their strength for His holy purposes, out of which democratic government has been evolved as the Christian expression of necessary restraint of evil and of the promotion of "the greatest good to the greatest number." Under theocracy, God's direct government of the Israelites, when sin so possessed the lives of men and manifested itself in crimes, and cruelty to humanity—"man's inhumanity to man" that made its "countless thousands mourn"—God sent the sword in the hand of the "revenger to execute His wrath" upon these evil doers."

The fall of monarchs with their crowns should not be disconcerting to Christians for kings were the choice of man and not of God. Jesus Christ as man exalted individuals into universal equality and in so doing chartered democracy as designed by Him in man's creation. Created in the image of God man was wholly good and free. In

this design there is no place in God's purpose for human inequalities as expressed in autocracy.

"God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever." In the fulfillment of the Word, that "endureth forever," "that there is no power but of God, and that he requires of all men everywhere subjection to the higher powers," be mindful, and beware. ". . . if thou do that which is evil be afraid for he (governmental agency, the sheriff, the soldier) beareth not the sword in vain." The sheriff may be a vile sinner in the sight of God, so the soldier may be, but as the expression of executive authority of constituted government, "the powers that be," "ordained of God," "he is the minister (magistrate) of God."

Not only individuals are held accountable to God for the right use, or abuse of the power, but God likewise holds "the powers that be," men in representative capacity, accountable not only as individuals but as "ministers of God." (Officers, directors and stockholders of corporations would do well to heed this truth that they never lose their individual identity and personal responsibility, any more than a governmental official, in the sight of God). Jesus Christ saw and reproved the abuse and misuse of power, divinely delegated, when He said to Pontius Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." Spiritual power is superior to physical force and is never unavailable except through unbelief. This truth was illus-

trated when Jesus reproved Peter for smiting Malcus with the sword on the occasion of His betrayal: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." But God is a just God and in Christ assumed full responsibility for the weakness of man he made and yet proved the power of man, through faith in God, to do the will of God on earth. As man, Jesus could not invoke this divine aid, for under execution of this unjust judgment He would ransom man's lost estate of eternal riches in everlasting life, thus "bringing life and immortality to light." Sin had brought its doom of death to man, through his own wilful act of disobedience to God, though fully able to obey. Man was a suicide, dead in sin, of his free commission. As St. Paul expresses it: "The wages of sin is death." No dead man can restore himself to life. God's contract with man was based upon the condition of man's obedience. Man accepted all the benefits of God's love and goodness and refused to discharge his obligations of obedience. By this act he forfeited life and all its benefits under this contract, or "covenant," and all right to all claims upon God for life. Therefore man was dead in sin, without power to recover his own life and without right of claim upon God for life, in whom, for whom, and to whom, is all life, and life and its tragedies cannot be otherwise successfully accounted for, or explained. Therefore if man were

to "live again," he could do so only by the grace and mercy of God, for man was hopelessly dead in sin and without any just claim on God. All praise to the infinite love, justice, mercy, and power of God! His love would not leave His most loved creature lost. Yet His justice could not excuse this violation of His law. Justice requires the guilty to suffer the penalty imposed for the crime committed. But this creature man, being dead, could not thus right the wrong, nor suffer to cancel his sin. Man, as man, was dead to God. Therefore, a living man, must suffer the penalty or man remain forever dead. A new man, receiving anew his life from God, must pay the penalty. All of God's works were good, and are forever good, and this new man must necessarily be good, wholly good, or "righteous." But for a newly created righteous man to suffer the penalty of the old unrighteous man would not be justice. There was no other alternative for man's salvation. So God, to be "just and justifier," Himself, in Jesus Christ, became man and suffered as man, though not a sinner yet as a sinner, sin's penalty for all the sins of men, that God's law might be vindicated, His justice preserved in the purity of its integrity, that God might prove His love as a Father, and that man might live again. Man was created in the image of God, and the only way he can be restored to that perfection is in this new creation. This new creature he becomes by faith or belief, or trust, that God, in Jesus Christ, suf-

fered the penalty of each man's sin—death—even the "ignominous death" on the cross of Calvary. By His suffering God is reconciled and we are redeemed. By our belief, that God, through His love for us exercised this creative power, suffered death in Jesus, and overcame the power of the devil in breaking the bonds of death, we overcome the permanent destruction of the body and escape eternal suffering of the spirit which can never die. Jesus submitted to the unrighteous judgment of Pontius Pilate and refrained from calling to his aid the legions of angels. This he did in fulfillment of the law and the prophesies and to prove his power to save, to save from eternal death even the dying thief with no chance to even restore the stolén goods, and with only time to repent and believe in the power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to save the soul. This is the Gospel I believe and preach, which is the saving power of God available to every human being who with repentant heart, believing mind and confessing lips comes to God through Christ.

Man's physical strength is of God's creative pewer, yet it is perverted to crime, even the crime of killing Jesus Christ, the Son of God. National strength is of God's sovereign power, yet history records, and the record is still in its making, the perversion of this power to oppression and destruction. God holds individuals and nations accountable to Him for wrongs done. In the exer-

cise of this sovereign power governments declare war and require those who owe them allegiance to fight their battles. It is the duty of citizens and subjects, to obey. God will hold those to account who ignorantly or intentionally improperly or wrongfully exercise this power, as he has in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Saul, Herod, Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and as He will the Kaiser. The ruins of their realms are temporal marks of divine reckoning for misused and abused sovereign power.

The individual soldier in obeying his country's call to arms bears no responsibility for his acts, as a soldier, in obedience to the command of a superior officer, for even Christ, as a man, must needs have been as a man "subject unto the higher powers," as he testifies. But the soldier's identity is never so submerged in the military mass that he loses personal accountability to God. He must therefore be able to obey the official command to "fire" at the heart of the enemy, and at the same time obey the Lord's command: "Love your enemies." In obeying the command, "Fire," he is respecting the divine precept: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers." In the act of firing, the responsibility for that act and its consequences rest upon the higher powers—Presidents, Kings, Kaisers, Congress, Parliaments and Reichstags, nor is individual responsibility to God lost in the representative relationship of these "powers that be." But the

command: "Love your enemies," is essentially personal and binding even in battle upon every soldier.

The soldier, called to fight his country's battles, however patriotic he may deem himself to be, and regardless of the righteousness of the cause, who is actuated by the individual impulse of hate or motive of revenge, has failed to obey the command: "Love your enemies," and has lost sight of his only justification in going to war, which is obedience to an authority ordained of God, and to destroy evil and produce good. The soldier who recognizes in his enemy, one who as he, is also bound by like compulsion and should be as he is, fighting for ultimate good, can fire under his superior's commnad without hate in his heart and without disobedience to the commandment: "Thou Shalt Not Kill." But if hate coil about his heart, burn in his eye, hiss in his breath, and vibrate in his muscles, he is a sinner before God. Let us turn from the soldier to the man out of whom by governmental metamorphosis this warlike entity has been made. Though through necessity of obedience to his superior officer's command, and without the necessity of hate in his heart, he be not a sinner in the sight of God for "killing" his fellow man in battle, yet his whole personality is not merged into the soldier. He is still a citizen, father, son, brother or husband, he is still the man he was before he put on the uniform and took up the weapons, and he goes

into battle that identical man, and goes the bond slave of sin, or enjoying the liberty of the forgiveness of sin by repentance therefor, faith in Jesus Christ, and with the unmistakable witness of the seal of God's Spirit. Therefore if the man, in that soldier's uniform, facing the enemy in defence of outraged Belgium or bleeding France, be a liar, thief, adulterer, in short a sinner, who has never sought and seen God in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he is guilty before God of that particular sin. Though he dies a hero in human eyes, he dies a sinner in God's eyes and eternal punishment is the retributive justice he must meet. Do you question the righteousness, the justice, the mercy of this stern statement? It is as sterling as it may seem severe. Justice is always exact and uncompromising, yet not without mercy, and this statement stands the high test. For that soldier who slays his enemy in battle had no escape from the sin of the violated commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," except that God is too merciful to require him to obey the "higer powers" that He has "ordained," and to hold him responsible for the acts necessitated by, or resulting from, that obedience. And God is likewise too just to permit the soldier through obedience, to meet death, or end his "probation" without securing him against the consequences of meeting death while in his sins. Therefore through a decade or more before the boy became a man, and before the man became the soldier, and every mo-

ment since God has provided "a way of escape" for him, by repentance for his sins, and faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. God is accessible to him by this simple plan of redemption without other aid than God's Holy Spirit and I doubt not that this has been the experience of many a boy "over there," when neither priest nor preacher was near. Jesus Christ is the only way to God, the Father, and God has given the Holy Bible, the "Word of Life," so man need not die, and the Light of the Holy Spirit as guide and witness that he may not plead the darkness, nor ignorance of the Way, and has sent his servants to teach and preach and lead and aid that all may understand all things needful for salvation.

CHAPTER III.

4 Why War Is Wrong.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill."
Ex. 20:13; Math. 5:43-8:
Mar. 10:19; Rom. 13:9.

This commandment lies at the very foundation of all right relationships between individuals and nations.

To take a man's life is not wrong solely because God has commanded: "Thou shalt not kill," but God has so commanded because it is wrong. It was wrong for Cain to kill Abel. The commandment was written in the human con-

ciousness of Adam and his progeny before it was inscribed upon the tables of stone on Sinai.

In the light of the Scriptures the plots of diabolical design of the Prussian war lords are wrong, the dastardly deeds of the "Central Powers" are wrong, the Kaiser's unchristian "Kultur" is wrong, the hate of the Hun and to hate the Hun are wrong and to this extent war is wrong. To the soul conscious of God and aware of accountability to Him, confronted with the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," pretense, excuse, or expediency are not sufficient to justify giving up life or taking the life of another upon the battlefield. To such a person any attempt to justify war upon a philosophical basis leaves a doubt in the mind, a misgiving in the heart, and unrest of soul. In this light there is a conflict between the absolute sovereignty of God and compulsory obedience to the authority of the state. Even when the prosecution of this war is pitched upon the high plane of the preservation and protection of democratic government or of humanitarian motives, we are still confronted with the forbidding command of God: "Thou shalt not kill," and the truth that Christ is the Prince of Peace and the precursor and power of peace on earth and good will among men, of which war is the antithesis.

No survivor of submarine attack, or soldier who has stood in the bloody quagmire of the front trenches, if a normal human being, doubts that war is the work of the devil. Jesus Christ

is therefore the soldier's friend, for he came "to destroy the works of the devil." War pertains exclusively to this world and this friend of the soldier said: "My kingdom is not of this world." War therefore can have no part in His Kingdom. His mission, life, character, precepts, and ascension and session on high verify this truth. The disciple of Christ must seek a more satisfying source of knowledge, conviction, and assurance for the justfication of war than Old Testament precedent, that human example, than doctrines set out in statutes of states, force of circumstances, human sympathies, than hate or revenge. In this, as in all else, to be right, he must seek first to know God's will. I know full well that some impetuous spirits will chafe under these words, but I beg of you to bear with me to the end for the good of the soul's salvation which is the only ultimate good in all of life. I well know to "cuss the Kaiser," and "hate the Hun" is popular just now, but both are unchristian and no true Christian can afford to surrender principle for popularity nor to escape unpopularity. Invectives and execrations upon the "Beast of Berlin," the anathematizing of names such as the "Potsdam-gang," the "hellish Hohenzollerens," is mere blast, lacking the projectile of soul-satisfying truth. The normal soul hungers and thirsts after righteousness. The soldier (and I employ this word to designate those of all branches of the service), who sails the submarine infested

deep, or who goes "over there" to meet the Hun across the shell holes of "no man's land," should feel the need, and has a right to demand, and in any event, should be provided a soul-satisfying and justifying reason for his course of action, at least for giving up his life. He is entitled to the truth. Superficial stuff in sermon, speech, and song may entertain and amuse some of the stay-at-homes and some of the boys on "training ships" and in "cantonments," but is utterly fails to meet the requirements of the normal soldier hourly facing death. Such should be prepared to die and he who is best prepared to die is best equipped to live his best. Such men at this point find that philosophical reasoning and patriotic fervor alone fails to satisfy. This is proof that nothing but Spiritual truth can meet the needs of the immortal soul.

To my mind there is no greater sin than to conceal life's great realities, and God's eternal verities with "camouflage" of distorted Scriptural truths and to offer the green fruits of ignorance, inexperience, and heathen philosophy to satisfy the spiritual craving of men and women offering their lives as sacrifices for the good of humanity and the future welfare and peace of the world. If I may now offer, as a humble servant of God, the rich ripe fruit from God's own Word, rightly interpreted and properly applied, in these perilous times for the faith of men, I will ever thank God for my prayer's answer for the privi-

lege of so great a service. If I, can, through this service, provide comfort to any perplexed soul, I will thank God for the blessing of sharing that comfort which the thoughts of this discourse have brought to me. I do this through no spirit of presumption but upon the conviction that the supreme need of man everywhere is God in Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding that Jehovah nerved the army of Israel in battle and that Christian nations are now engaged in the most colossal war of all time, with all reverence and due consideration, I assert that war is wrong, upon my faith in the immutablity of this truth of God, "Thou shalt not kill."

War may be wrong for all combatant nations and yet right for God, for the reason, that the relationship between men and nations is different from that between God and individual men and God and nations. God's authority over man is absolute, whereas that of man over his fellow man is necessarily limited and conditioned by this absolute authority of supreme sovereignty, for "all power is of God." He has the right to punish with the sword or otherwise one or all the nations at war for the abuse or failure to rightly employ this power.

I assume every one here to-day to be normal. If I am correct in this assumption each one is opposed to war. Our Christian President, Woodrow Wilson, resorted apparently to every honorable means to avoid involving our nation in this awful

orgy of blood, and every right minded human being is averse to war, primarily because it involves the taking of human life.

War is wrong because it necessitates the killing of man by man. The fundamental right of man is to live, to enjoy his life of liberty and equality in pursuit of happiness, and to partake of the fruits of his labors, ever mindful of his obligation, God imposed, in "The Golden Rule," to respect the same rights in all others. In the mutuality of recognition and observance of this obligation lies the security of this fundamental right of individuals and nations. But war necessitates its disregard and is therefore fundamentally wrong. To the soldier at war who witnesses—I might say experiences—the destruction of life and property and the suffering of women and children, the aged and decrepit, that soldier, without any deliberate process of reasoning, is immediately conscious of the fact that it is all wrong.

God has decreed the killing of man by man a sin, and man himself has declared it in his laws a crime penalized by forfeiture of the life of the offender. Some unmindful of this sin and crime and of the sober intelligence of the American people have suggested, for "draft purposes," that the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill," be temporarily eliminated from the decalogue. Such self deception is diabolical. This commandment is not confined to the printed page. It is the will of God and written in the flesh and mind and

spirit of man. Let no mental superficiality and moral cowardice prompt the hiding NOW of this eternal, immutable truth of God, inseparable from the life of God, coeval and coextensive with God Himself. It is the will of God, the love of God, concerning the life of man to preserve it. Let no creature of time, deny it, or disturb it in its God-appointed place in His law.

The supreme meaning and our purpose in this war, and its most lasting impression upon the race will be that war itself is wrong and must be prevented. The Allies are at war fundamentally and primarily to prevent war because it is wrong for men of the Prussian Empire to take the life and destroy the earnings of the life energies of the people of Belgium and France.

"All men are of one blood" and "made in the image of God" and when one human being slays another he mars the unity of the race and the image of God, and does violence to his own soul. God gave life, His life, to man to live it. God gave life, His life, in Jesus Christ, for man to redeem man's life that he might live it and live it forever. Through no personal sacrifice of one's own life, in any cause, but through this grace of God, in Christ Jesus, this eternal life is the gift of God to man.

CHAPTER IV.
America's Justification in Entering the World War

I have served my country as a soldier; I rejoice in its history of noble achievements; I cherish its traditions, and respect the emblem of its gracious power; and I love the people who have made and are maintaining this beneficent government of the United States of America. I am therefore not satisfied to take for granted, or assume her justification in this world war, but I would know it and the reason for it.

America, though not perfectly conscious of the fact, is fighting to destroy war because it is wrong, and in vindication of the integrity of the universe involved in obedience to this command: "Thou shalt not kill." It appears that this will be one good God will bring out of this evil—war—which was not of our making, thank God, and with it the conviction that every man is a part of the universe of moral and spiritual order divinely designed for peaceful progression. God's hand is still at the helm in the affairs of men.

America's justification lies not in the purity of her motive, though that, from a human point of view, none may justly impugne, for no human motive can justify war, but in that she is the instrument in the hand of God to punish the wicked who would make war, to prevent the darkness in which Germany would force the race to stumble on through a Christless "kultur," to its doom,

and that this world may have light and life in Christ. As the light of day fixes the image on the plate, so the perfect light of God's love, in Jesus Christ, alone can bring out the image of God on the negative of human nature.

CHAPTER V.

Conclusions

War as a judgment of God is right, but as a human condition is wrong, for the wrong human condition brings the just judgment. God takes no pleasure in the punishment of the wicked, and that which provokes God's displeasure is wrong.

Economically war is wrong because it lays waste and destroys life, and the works of the hand of God and man.

The law of self defense is one expression of the democratic principle of the sovereignty of the individual.

The soldier is accountable to God for his sins at every stage of his service.

" . . . The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," yet God has by the battle's lurid lights revealed to this generation life's spiritual values. With this vision, reason and the Christian religion must concur and co-operate in every life in order that it may attain its highest, noblest, and most useful culmination. Christianity is progressive. Its principles are eternal and adapted to the greatest possible human ad-

vancement. Designed for that end the application of these principles is the only means of continuous physical, mental and spiritual progression.

Our government, until recent years, has been an experiment where God and the Bible occupied a conspicuous place in the education of the people. Leaving God out of the education of the child and youth is an experiment that is even now producing alarming symptoms. In our republic the citizen is both the sovereign and soldier, and Godless sovereigns and soldiers delight in blood and tyranny. Some wise man has said: "It takes a hundred years to make a scholar." A longer time then must be required to test a system of education. Education is preparation for life and no one is prepared to live without a knowledge of God in Christ.

Our constitution guarantees that all beneath the stars and stripes may worship God according to the dictates of conscience. The conclusion that any than the "only true and living God" and "Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" was that God in contemplation is foreign to the intent of those who drafted the Declaration of Independence and who framed the constitution of the United States. Those who inscribed this guarantee at the threshold of the temple of Democracy did not dream that an educational system would be devised or permitted by American citizens which would deprive the children of the United States of America of learning of the

God they reverenced, worshiped and trusted, and from off Whose altar they brought the sacred fire of liberty to enlighten the world. "Lest we forget," I reiterate that a general system of education where 75 per cent, at least, of our people receive their only "schooling," cannot show its full effects in less than one hundred years of trial. Bolshevism, German Socialism, Mormonism and Russellism, Eddyism and other "isms" of a political, social and religious nature are manifesting themselves and heathen altars and temples desecrate American soil. A Godless school is the incubator of anarchy. Christianity, if hostorical data furnish reliable basis for conclusion, is the only effective preventive of chaotic condition in the political, social and religious realms. There is no place for chaos, and anarchy with its red emblem, in God's government of this world, and He will govern it to the end.

Man was created by God to live, propagate, and preserve life and not to destroy his own life or that of another. The conditions with which the Christian must comply, as a soldier, are almost impossible with man, and only possible with God in man. War is a judgment of God upon the wicked. God takes no pleasure in the "judgment" death of the wicked. It causes a displeasure to God and is wrong. This judgment may be visited at the same time upon all the nations involved in war and the only possible good that can come out of war under such circumstances is that

which God in his infinite wisdom, mercy, power, and love brings from the evil thing. These facts compel the conclusion that war is wrong. The life of Christ is the perfect life. Israel was storm swept and the heathen raged but His was a life of peace. The church is not a building, or human organization. The church is an organism of living functions. Christ is the Head of this living body and the individual believers in Christ are the members united in this body. The Church on earth, in this proper sense, is the normal life of the race and Hate and his bloody brood have no part in it. Bloody revolutions are not dynamics of political, social or religious progress, Progress is not the product of revolutionary wars. Such revolutions are evidences of opposition to progress in the direction of human good and are the symptoms of doing evil. And progress has been made in spite of revolutionary wars.

The present war was not necessary for progress. It denotes Prussian opposition to Christian advancement under "democracy." It likewise proves the failure of nations, professedly Christian, to prevent this cataclysm. We are only possessors under God's ownership. Billions of dollars and millions of men are being spent in the prosecution of this war. In this estimate we take no account of what will have to be expended as its consequences. Had the church possessed the faith, courage, and zeal of the apostles, and it should have had; had these men and this money

been available to such a united Church, and they should have been; and had such a church employed such resources for righteousness this war could not have occurred. For this reason this war is wrong, and the responsibility is more universal than is generally admitted.

A nation at war, used as the avenging sword of God, as such, is committing no sin, yet the nation as a nation may be sinful, and bleeding because of its sins. The weapons of war are instruments for punishment of evil doers and war is the condition prevailing during their employment. War is therefore an abnormal condition and if general and continuous would result in the extermination of the human race and such a condition is wrong lest man conclude he has no right, as a race, to live, and in this he must needs oppose God and find his conclusion false.

I have undertaken to show America's justification in entering this war and that war itself is wrong. America's justification lies in her divine employment as a means to preserve and extend righteous human government and to destroy war. If my conclusions be correct and it be true that democracy is Christianity's highest political expression, then when, national and international democracy prevails throughout the earth wherein Christian principles are recognized, as such, and applied, though Christianity may not become universal, yet it will prevail and predominate and the Christian majority of one Christian democra-

cy will not by voice or vote declare war against another Christian democracy and war will cease. The Church of Jesus Christ must Christianize the persons and peoples of the world before human governments shall thus express and execute the will of God. Christ is the foundation of our peace and the glory of our hope. Christ proved the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man in a unity of universal family relationship. He likewise proved that all "powers that be" are of God, and that God is no respecter of persons, hence, all men are equal before God and the law of man. The will of man is a law, though not the highest, of his temporal and eternal destiny. From these facts it appears that God created man free, and in His plan to redeem man from the will of the devil back to willingness to do the perfect will of God, God has disciplined this creature of His love in Egypt and Babylon, and tutored him in "the Wilderness," and in the kingdoms of many lands, that he might again become self-governing in an autonomous state, or "democracy." With Christ the founder, democracy can derive none of its principles nor exercise any of its just powers, outside of Christianity. In this autonomous state, which is named "democracy," the will of the majority of the people, expressed by their votes, is sovereign. The logical conclusion as well as the democratic doctrine is, war should never be declared nor the sword drawn by a self-governing people without their wills freely ex-

pressed in press, voice, and vote. As one good out of this evil, I believe the "Allies" as the "minister," the "revenger," the "sword" of God should drive these enemies of self-government, these enemies of simple Christian faith and practices, across the Rhine, and with unsheathed sword, and fixed bayonets, under the allied flags, hold the defeated enemy at bay until the peoples of the Prussian Empire and its dependencies may unintimidated and unafraid set up governments of, by, and for the people, thus saving them from the chaos of anarchy, saving them to Christian civilization, and preventing them remaining a further menace to the peace of the world. Until then the task we undertook is unfinished and the world is unsafe for democracy.

This war has demonstrated that no diabolical agency can destroy the power of God on earth and that preparedness for war does not prevent war but precipitates it psychologically as well as physically. War can be prevented only through the personal acceptance of Christ as Savior by a predominant number, and by national practice, and international application, of Christian principles. Then and not till then will peace prevail upon the earth among the nations. In the great council of the nations, at the end of the war, the supreme issue will not be repairing damage done —that is impossible—nor will it be occupied with holding an inquest over that great part of the human race sacrificed in making such a conference

possible. When these plenipotentiaries are called together there will be among them men of moral courage and spiritual vision with wisdom to decree, in unity of covenant, that war is fundamentally wrong and hereafter, as long as the race of man dwells on the earth, war shall be condemned, prohibited, and prevented, thus approximating in our crude state and environment the ideal state of divine design in which God shall gather together in one all things in heaven and earth in Christ. The nations which shall be represented at the great international council table, when their work there will have been finished, must have the united support of the revived, Spirit vitalized Church of Jesus Christ, or their plans and purposes for permanent peace will fail, because of the lack of the only force that can function in universal peace.

The decree of this international court will be Christian cizilization's verdict: WAR IS WRONG

"To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever."

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